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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 91-65

Prospects for Argentina

Submitted by the
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The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, and NSA

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE NUMBER 91-65

Prospects for Argentina



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PROSPECTS FOR ARGENTINA

THE PROBLEM

To assess the situation in Argentina, and to estimate the prospects for the Illia administration through the congressional elections scheduled for the spring of 1967.

CONCLUSIONS

- A. During its nearly two years in office, the Illia administration has achieved for Argentina the longest period of political stability in its recent history, but has failed to develop a strong base of popular and congressional support. During the same period the Argentine economy has experienced a recovery, but only to the level it had achieved in 1961. The Illia administration has failed to cope effectively with inflationary pressures or to make headway with the measures required to promote balanced economic growth. (*Paras.* 7-30)
- B. The March 1965 congressional elections marked the return of the Peronists as a major legitimate political force. The trend toward a political polarization around the Illia administration and the Peronist opposition will probably develop further in the congressional and gubernatorial elections in 1967. (*Paras. 12, 34*)
- C. To avert a Peronist landslide in the 1967 elections, President Illia will have to act more vigorously to create an attractive political alternative to Peronism. We believe it unlikely that he can do so. Alternatively, he will have to devise some way to restrict Peronist participation in the election. This would, of course, frustrate the endeavor to reintegrate the Peronists into the normal political system. The reaction of the die-hard Peronists would be violent, but could almost certainly be contained. (Paras. 34, 37)





- D. The Argentine military remain the only element capable of overthrowing the government. The officers now in control of the military establishment would prefer to preserve the constitutional regime. However, the military leadership in general has been antagonized by the frustration of its desire for Argentina to play a leading role in the OAS peacekeeping force in the Dominican Republic. Some officers who have long regarded the Illia administration as weak and ineffectual are now less disposed than ever to make due allowance for its political handicaps. Whether the Argentine military will overthrow the Illia administration within the period of this estimate remains highly uncertain, depending almost entirely on their own estimate of the developing situation in Argentina. (Paras. 33, 38-40)
- E. If the military should conclude that the Peronists under extremist leadership were likely to prevail in the 1967 elections, they would first urge upon the government the necessity of restricting Peronist participation in the elections. If not satisfied in that respect, they would almost certainly intervene to impose their will, or to prevent or annul the elections. (*Para. 41*)
- F. Most Peronist leaders recognize that the movement is on probation in its resurgence into the national political arena. If, during the next year or so, the Peronist leadership, or some elements of it, should establish a reputation for reasonableness and moderation, some of the military might come to discriminate between "good" Peronists and "bad" Peronists and to tolerate the former. Thus a Peronist electoral victory under moderate leadership might precipitate a division among the military, with some calling for immediate counteraction and others seeking to preserve the constitutional regime at least until the presidential election in 1969. In such a case, a period of recurrent military crises, like that which occurred in 1962-1963, might ensue. (Paras. 32, 42)
- G. The Argentine Communist Party is the largest in the Western Hemisphere (60,000-65,000 members), but is not an influential political force. The Communists and Castroists have no significant subversive potential in Argentina except insofar as they may be able to act in conjunction with a mass reaction of frustrated and embittered Peronists. (*Paras. 18*, 35)





DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1. Argentina is well endowed with both human and material resources. It has an extensive and very fertile agricultural area, a developed industrial base, and adequate petroleum reserves and hydroelectric power potential. Its population, nearly 22 million, is homogeneous, being almost entirely of European stock; some 90 percent are literate. The moderate rate of population growth (1.8 percent) exerts no serious pressure on available resources. The Argentine people are foremost in Latin America in terms of both technical skills and a generally high level of living. Nevertheless, Argentina is plagued by deep-seated economic, social, and political maladjustments. These result from the inability of its political leadership to resolve strong social antagonisms and to achieve a basic political consensus.
- 2. Argentina was long ruled by a corrupt and complacent oligarchy which ignored the rising expectations and dissatisfactions of growing urban middle class and labor elements. This oligarchy was replaced by the quasi-fascist regime of Juan Perón, a military leader who won strong popular support by catering to nationalistic and working class interests. Perón's program of rapid industrialization and his provision of economic and social benefits for the working class were accomplished at the expense of agriculture, the principal interest of the ousted oligarchy and the chief source of foreign exchange. Mounting internal and external debt, together with the regime's waste and corruption, brought Perón to political bankruptcy. In 1955 he was overthrown by the military.
- 3. Since 1955 successive Argentine governments have failed to solve two basic problems: (a) how to get the economy straightened out and growing again—the per capita domestic product, high by Latin American standards, is probably no greater than it was in 1957; and (b) how to permit the Peronists to participate in the political life of the country without opening the door to a return of Peronism through democratic processes or provoking a military overthrow of the constitutional system. The measures required for the first purpose bear most heavily upon the working population, in contrast to the favor which they enjoyed under Perón, and this contrast tends to confirm them in their Peronism and their alienation from the rest of the society.
- 4. Prior to the 1963 elections the Argentine military were united in their determination to prevent any Peronist return to power, but were divided on how best to accomplish that purpose. Some, called "Reds," advocated a long period of authoritarian rule without elections, as necessary for a thorough reconstruction of the country. Others, called "Blues," insisted upon the restoration of constitutional civil government—with appropriate safeguards. The military permitted the election and inauguration of President Frondizi in 1958, but re-





garded with suspicion his relations with the Peronists, whom he was trying to integrate into his own political organization. They were also critical of his administration of the government and his "softness" towards Cuba. When Peronists won important offices in the provincial elections of 1962, the military overthrew the Frondizi government. Then, after a sharp struggle between the "Reds" and "Blues," the "Blues" prevailed and permitted the election and inauguration of President Illia in 1963.

- 5. Frondizi had been the leader of the UCRI, a branch of the middle class Radical Civic Union (UCR) which had dominated Argentine politics from 1916 to 1930. (The Argentine middle class, comprising about 30 percent of the population, is one of the largest in Latin America.) Illia was the nominee of the UCRP, a combination of Radical factions formed in 1957 to oppose Frondizi. There are many other parties and factions involved in Argentine politics, but the recent trend has been toward a polarization around Illia's UCRP and the Peronists.
- 6. Despite notable gains in 1964, the Argentine economy remains sluggish. Industrial production costs are unrealistically high, inflation is chronic, real wages are probably no better than they were eight years ago. Foreign capital is needed to stimulate economic growth, but nationalistic predilections have militated against obtaining it. Operating within a constitutional system and from a minority political base, Illia's difficult task is to fashion congressional majorities in support of unpopular economic measures. Meanwhile, the military is watching the situation carefully and is sensitive to signs of ineffectuality in civilian leadership.

II. THE PRESENT SITUATION

A. Key Political Forces

The Illia Administration

7. The factions which coalesced in 1957 to form the UCRP were united by little more than their common hostility to Frondizi. Illia's selection to be the party's candidate in the 1963 election resulted largely from bitter rivalries among the better-known party leaders and the general supposition that no UCRP candidate could win anyhow. Indeed, Illia's election was made possible only by the fragmentation of other political parties and the exclusion of Peronist candidates—he won a plurality with only some 25 percent of the popular vote. His subsequent victory in the electoral college was accomplished by a series of deals with other political leaders who were unenthusiastic about the man but eager to end active military direction of the day-to-day operations of the government. He entered the presidency with a narrow UCRP majority in the Senate, but only a plurality (72 out of 192 seats) in the Chamber of Deputies. Since the UCRP came to power without a nationally prominent president, a carefully developed economic and political program, or an effective majority in

¹ See the Appendix for a detailed description of Argentine political parties and movements.





congress, its legislative successes have required skillful performances by the UCRP congressional leadership.

- 8. Most of the UCRP leaders maintain strongly statist and economic nationalist views which hinder solution of the administration's fiscal problems. These attitudes and the party's internal differences have been key factors in delaying issuance of the administration's economic plans.
- In contrast to his predecessors, particularly the charismatic Perón and the dynamic Frondizi, President Illia has stressed compromise and gradualism. His guarded pronouncements and tendency to hope that time will at least mitigate administration problems have caused some Argentines to dub him "the gray fox" while others depict him as a tortoise. Partly because Illia's assumption of office coincided with an economic upturn, his "quiet" style and conciliatory tactics were particularly effective in keeping the Peronist problem under wraps. By obtaining for organized labor, the principal Peronist base, minimum wage and price control legislation, by using restraint in measures to prevent Peronist unions from occupying industrial plants, and by refusing to panic at Peronist efforts to secure the return of Perón from exile, Illia has helped Argentina to its longest interval of political stability during the last decade. Also important, however, has been the influence of Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, who has established a good working relationship with President Illia and has insisted that the Armed Forces refrain from interfering in day-to-day politics despite military distrust of some administration leaders.
- 10. In its foreign relations the Illia administration has followed traditional lines in emphasizing its support for nonintervention, self-determination, trade with all nations, and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. It has stressed the need for Latin American unity, especially to solve development problems. Despite the internal political importance of maintaining an independent foreign policy, the Argentine Government has generally supported the US position on critical issues between the US and Communist powers. Except for occasional minor incidents, Argentina continues to maintain friendly relations with all other Latin American countries except Cuba. It has agreed to submit a longstanding border dispute with Chile to arbitration.
- 11. The principal irritant in US-Argentine relations is a dispute between various US petroleum companies and the Argentine Government. Upon taking office the Illia administration, in accordance with its campaign promises, promptly cancelled certain petroleum development contracts made with foreign companies during the Frondizi administration.² Settlement with these companies has been delayed by basic disagreements within the administration, by involvement of the dispute in Argentine domestic politics, and because the prob-

[&]quot;The development under these contracts enabled Argentina to become virtually self-sufficient in petroleum production, by the time they were cancelled, but rising demand has again outstripped production. Since the contracts were not submitted to the Argentine Congress for its approval, they have been attacked in Argentina as unconstitutional, tainted with corruption, and an invasion of the prerogatives of the state petroleum monoply (YPF)—a sensitive point with the Argentine public.





lems involved are so varied that each case requires an individual settlement. This delay has caused a slowdown in the US economic aid program.

12. During his first 18 months in office Illia did succeed in reducing some of the sharpest political tensions, in maintaining good relations with the military leadership, in keeping civilian government functioning, and in moving Argentina through an initial stage toward restoration of constitutionalism. But during this period the Illia administration was not strong enough to come to grips with some of its most difficult economic and political problems. The results of congressional elections in March 1965 have probably reduced its chances for developing a consensus on key policy decisions. The UCRP increased its popular vote, but lost two seats in the Chamber. At the same time the Peronist bloc gained 35 seats, the only net gain made by any political group. Its 52 deputies now constitute the second largest group in the Chamber. The UCRP, with 70, still remains the largest party there, but, whereas UCRP legislative leaders could formerly operate among many fragmentary political elements to construct majorities for specific legislative proposals, their ability to do so is now reduced by the emergence of a major opposition bloc. In some cases, the residual minor parties are disposed to oppose the UCRP and to court the Peronists. Moreover, relatively few Peronist seats will be at stake in the 1967 election, which will probably reflect a further polarization of political support around the UCRP administration and the Peronist opposition.³

Figure 1
COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

		Seats won $(+)$	
		or lost $(-)$	Seats to be
		in the March	CONTESTED IN
Party	Seats	1965 elections	March 1967
People's Radical Civic Union (UCRP)	. 70	-2	35
Peronist		(+35)	(8)
Popular Union		+36	
Neo-Peronist		-1	8
Movement for Integration and Development			
(MID)		-4	9
Federation of Center Parties (FNCP)		-2	4
Intransigent Radical Civic Union (UCRI)	. 10	-10	9
Progressive Democrats (PDP)		-3	6
Union of Argentine People (UDELPA)		-9	6
Argentine Socialist Party (PSA)		-2	3
Christian Democrats (PDC)		-3	. 4
Democratic Socialists (PSD)	. 2		2
Others *	_	-3	9
	192		96 ^b

^{*} Includes various parties organized primarily on a provincial basis.

^b Plus whatever vacancies occur prior to the election. Elections for the governorships of the provinces and the provincial legislatures will also be held in 1967.



³ See Figure 1 which follows for a recapitulation of the March 1965 election results and a summation of the seats which are to be contested in the elections scheduled for March 1967.



The Peronists

13. Argentina's primary political problem continues to be the integration of the Peronists into the political processes on the same footing as other parties without provoking a serious military reaction. The Peronist movement retains its mass support because labor groups are convinced that it is the only effective vehicle for satisfying their needs and aspirations. They still recall the social, economic, and political gains organized labor made during the Perón era (1943-1955) and resent the less favored treatment which they have received from subsequent governments. Consequently, Peronist political movements retain the allegiance of more than one-third of the electorate and Peronist leadership controls about two-thirds of the Argentine labor movement. Among the Peronists there are many political and tactical differences and there is a continuing struggle for leadership as the chances for the return of the aging (70) former dictator diminish.

14. The bulk of the rank-and-file remember Perón as the dynamic, all-powerful leader of 15 years ago. Some Peronist leaders publicly profess their determination to secure Perón's return and make periodic trips to Spain to maintain rapport with him. Even avowed neo-Peronists (e.g., those provincial leaders who contested the 1963 congressional elections despite Perón's order to abstain and who have effective control in their local areas) seek to avoid an open break with Perón and his lieutenants. Some of the neo-Peronists did cooperate with the Illia administration prior to the March 1965 elections and may provide a moderating influence on the newly-elected Peronists who, for the most part, have trade union backgrounds.

15. When in power the Peronists were a heterogeneous lot held together by Perón's dominant personality. They had no rational program for resolving Argentina's economic problems then, nor do they have one now. Peronism was a mass protest movement antagonistic to other social groups and contemptuous of democratic processes of government. Its social and economic program, *Justicialismo*, is largely a potpourri of high-sounding phrases drawn from welfare and corporate statism and papal encyclicals. The present leadership of the Peronist bloc includes representatives of four distinct Peronist factions and its declared intent to behave as a "responsible opposition" has yet to be tested.

16. Although Perón and most of his lieutenants profess friendship for the US, Peronism's main stress is on an "independent" foreign policy in line with the opportunistic "Third Position" emphasized by Perón in the 1946-1955 period. Thus far neither the Castroites nor the Communists (despite supporting Peronist candidates in the 1962 and 1965 elections) have had much success in their efforts to establish a "Popular Front" with the Peronists. However, there are small extremist Peronist factions, including the pro-Castro group led by John William Cooke, a former Peronist congressman, that are willing to cooperate with the extreme left.





Other Political Elements 4

17. The recent polarization around Illia's UCRP and the Peronists has seriously weakened other parties. In the March election the Movement of Integration and Development (MID)—the vehicle of former President Frondizi—was a poor third with only 6.4 percent of the popular vote. Other left-of-center parties got even less support. On the conservative side, although there were some gains in individual provinces, most of the conservative political groupings have become so badly fragmented that they are important nationally only when there is a close, important vote in Congress.

18. The Argentine Communist Party, with some 60,000-65,000 members, is the largest in the Western Hemisphere, but is not an influential force on the Argentine political scene. The party leadership has continued to prefer legalist political tactics to the risks of violent action. From time to time, it has made overtures to certain Peronist leaders in the hope of enlarging its own influence through joint political efforts. There are two small Communist splinter groups in Argentina, the Movement of Revolutionary Action and the Revolutionary Vanguard, both of which adhere to the Communist Chinese line on the need for direct action. Older and more firmly established is the Argentine Trotskyite movement, which in its various organizations has a membership of perhaps 10,000.

B. Role of the Military

19. Early in the nation's history the Argentine military pre-empted the position of final arbiter in Argentine politics. Generally, it has exercised that prerogative only during periods of crisis and only after the nation's civilian leadership had proved inadequate. Since 1930 the military have intervened in the political system on several occasions, most recently in 1962-1963. Each time, however, those military leaders advocating withdrawal of the Armed Forces from continued direct participation in day-to-day politics have prevailed. Nonetheless, the idea that an extended period of military rule may become necessary to prepare the way for "responsible civilian government" still has some support among active as well as retired officers.

20. Although attitudes toward national politics differ and there are interservice and personal rivalries, the Armed Forces are united in their determination that Perón and traditional Peronism shall not return to power in Argentina. General Onganía, however, accepted President Illia's decision to permit Peronist participation in the March congressional elections. Onganía has had some success in encouraging the military to focus attention on professional military

⁵ As a result of the Illia administration's repeal of certain restrictive decrees and legislation, the Argentine Communist Party is no longer outlawed. However, through his use of the electoral courts, Illia has kept the party from presenting candidates in the national elections. In the only provincial election the party did contest—in Mendoza—it failed to elect any of its candidates to the provincial legislature and polled only some 7,500 of more than 240,000 votes.



^{&#}x27;For a discussion of these other political parties and movements, see Appendix.



matters, and in particular on a program for streamlining and modernizing the Argentine military establishment.⁶ But the overriding problem of the military-Peronist relationship has by no means been resolved. The conduct of the Peronists in months to come will be a factor influencing the Armed Forces position on the question of Peronist participation in the key 1967 congressional and gubernatorial elections.

C. The Economy

21. The Argentine economy shows mixed tendencies. The basic resources of the country are certainly adequate for a high rate of development. The condition of much of the industrial plant and equipment is good. Moreover, a large part of the cultivated land is so fertile, even with little use of fertilizer or expenditure on other improvements, that Argentina's agricultural sector produces enough for the population and usually for very substantial export.

22. In view of these assets, Argentine economic performance has been disappointing. Since 1950 the economy has followed a boom-and-bust pattern, with the depression phases of the cycle wiping out most of the gains of the prosperous times; the average annual rate of economic growth has been only about 2½ percent, and the per capita growth rate less than one percent. Most Argentine industries continue to be high cost producers, heavily dependent on official protection from outside competition. The railroad, highway, and port facilities remain in sore need of rehabilitation and modernization. Agricultural methods remain technologically backward in many respects; there is even a shortage of such simple facilities as roofed storage places for wheat.

23. In 1964 the economy experienced a substantial recovery, but the growth of some eight percent merely brought it back to the level reached in 1961. Moreover, much of this improvement was the fortuitous result of good crops and good export prices. There was no appreciable progress in the government's handling of financial and budgetary affairs; indeed the budget deficit, which had risen to US \$500 million in 1963, increased in 1964 to \$1.2 billion. Inflation has now become chronic, and has run at 20-30 percent a year for the past three years.

24. The public external debt inherited by the Illia government still amounted to some \$2.4 billion after the payments made to the foreign holders in 1964. (Private debt not guaranteed by the government comes to another \$800 million.) In meeting the 1964 payments, the government had to draw down its international reserves.⁷ It is presently seeking debt renegotiation, which would stretch out a portion (\$380 million) of the large payments on the public debt now

⁷This brought the level of reserves to an estimated US \$192 million, as compared to the post-Perón peak of \$698 million in 1960 and \$322 million at the end of 1963.



⁶ In May 1964, Argentina signed a military assistance agreement with the US which provided the Armed Forces with more than \$20 million in grant assistance during 1964 and 1965 and the right to purchase additional equipment on credit.



scheduled to come due in 1965-1966 (nearly \$1 billion), but it has shied away from an accord with the International Monetary Fund, whose financial assistance would be contingent upon a more rigorous domestic stabilization policy.

25. Private capital inflows have slowed since 1962, partly owing to political and economic uncertainties and partly because of the Illia administration's action in cancelling the petroleum contracts with US firms and its delay in reaching settlements with them. At the same time, the inability of the Argentine state petroleum monopoly to meet growing domestic demand has forced the import of petroleum in growing amounts—at a cost of almost \$70 million in 1964.

III. THE OUTLOOK

A. Economic Prospects

26. During the past six months or so, the Illia administration has shown an increased awareness of the serious economic situation it faces. It has taken some steps to bring revenues and expenditures into closer alignment by ordering government enterprises to cut waste, by revising the tax structure and the supervision of tax collections, and by increasing the prices charged for state-supplied goods and services.⁸ Through such measures it has hoped to reduce the budget deficit for 1965 to about 10 percent below 1964 levels and to cut in half the amount of the deficit financed through inflationary bank borrowing. Because of such factors as wage raises and currency devaluation, however, we believe that the government will find it difficult to achieve these goals.

27. A five-year National Development Plan (1965-1969) has been prepared under administration auspices, but its issuance was delayed, partly by disagreement within Illia's own party. The Plan calls for about a five percent rate of annual economic growth, a gradual reduction of inflation, a rapid expansion of agricultural output and exports, an increase in the production of intermediate goods (steel, pulp and paper, and petrochemicals) and a large expansion in public power, fuel supplies, transport facilities, and new construction. The Plan calls for financing through the rescheduling of part of the existing external public debt and through new long-term and medium-term foreign credits.

28. Much of the Plan seems sensible and well-adapted to the country's needs, but the fulfillment of its goals depends to a very important degree on the willingness and ability of the government to legislate and administer a series of painful anti-inflationary measures. These include reduction of the number of excess public workers, much greater restraint in the granting of wage increases, improved debt management, tighter control of the budget, and perhaps some further reduction of non-essential imports. The administration's reluctance to go along with recommendations of this kind by the IMF will make more diffi-

^b These price increases, however, will be largely offset by recent wage raises granted workers in the transportation and other state enterprises.





cult the task of lining up the large amount of foreign financing envisaged for the Plan. Although Illia will almost certainly be able to renegotiate part of the heavy foreign debt payments due this year and next, such relief will not provide the new money needed to carry out the Plan.

29. Even a maintenance of present economic conditions will necessitate official decisions which will incur political opposition, particularly from the resurgent, labor-based, Peronist movement. And the measures required to support any sustained and balanced pattern of economic growth will entail substantial political risks, especially in view of the political polarization apparent since the March 1965 elections.

30. We believe that, in these circumstances, Illia will not pursue a strong and vigorous economic program, but will continue his policies of compromise and adjustment. Inflationary pressure will probably continue to rise; we estimate that the actual increase in cost of living will exceed the government's 20 percent goal for 1965. The recent partial devaluation of the peso (in April) from about 150 to 171/173 to the dollar, when the "parallel" or black market was about 220 to the dollar, is an example of the temporary, partial measures the administration is likely to take. Policies of this sort provide little chance for sustained economic growth, but avoid decisions of the kind that brought the Frondizi administration's political demise. Nonetheless, even a month-to-month program could be adversely affected by certain variables beyond the administration's control, such as unfavorable weather and fluctuations in world commodity prices.

B. The Political Outlook

Illia's Political Prospects

31. The gains of the Popular Union Party in the March elections marked a major step forward in the reintegration of Peronists into the political system. At the same time it underlined the failure of Illia's attempts to attract a sizable number of Peronists into the UCRP. The UCRP's leadership is still debating what strategy it should employ in the months ahead. Illia may have increasing difficulty in controlling his own party with relation to the selection of new party leadership next fall and to politically unpopular measures such as economic stabilization. The administration will probably gain some legislative support from non-Peronist parties, depending on the issues involved, but some leaders of these parties can be expected to oppose UCRP measures that seem to threaten the prerogatives of private business and commercial interests.

32. Most Peronist leaders recognize that the movement is on probation in its resurgence into the national political arena. Thus the more moderate elements, and particularly the neo-Peronist political leaders from the provinces, will attempt to restrain the movement's extremist labor-based Congressmen and to act as a "responsible opposition." However, while cooperation between the Peronists and the administration might be feasible on certain issues over the next few months, such cooperation would be very difficult to maintain on a broad





front and would be virtually impossible in the months preceding the key March 1967 provincial and congressional elections. Thus Illia is likely to become even more dependent upon *ad hoc* combinations to secure passage of essential legislation.

33. Illia's delicate relations with both the congress and the military have been complicated by the crisis in the Dominican Republic. Illia was predisposed to support the US in that matter. He prepared legislation authorizing Argentine participation in the OAS peacekeeping force, but was deterred from submitting it by the vehemence and virtual unanimity of the congressional reaction against the US military intervention and by growing confusion regarding the actual situation in the Dominican Republic. This adverse congressional reaction reflected not only traditional Argentine opposition to such interventions, but also a presupposition that the US had intervened to suppress democratic elements and to sustain an unpopular military regime. If in the end the US should develop and support a political solution of the Dominican crisis that appeared to be popular and constitutionalist, much of this adverse political reaction would be assuaged, although there would remain a hard core of Argentine antagonism toward the US intervention. Meanwhile, however, Argentine military leaders in general have been frustrated by the disappointment of their strong desire for Argentina to play a leading role in the OAS force—a desire prompted by a combination of their anti-communism with their professional pride, their interest in earning continued US military aid, and their jealousy of Brazil. Some officers who have long regarded the Illia administration as weak and ineffectual now deeply resent its failure to act decisively in this case and are less disposed than ever to make due allowance for its political handicaps. Indeed, there is some reason to believe that these officers are now seriously engaged in contingency planning for a coup.

34. Illia's limited room for maneuver within the constitutional framework will be further restricted, as the 1967 congressional and gubernatorial elections approach, by military sensitivity regarding the political prospects of the Peronists. On present form, the Peronists, in a free election, would be likely to win at least a plurality in Congress and the governorships of such key provinces as Buenos Aires and Córdoba. To avert that, Illia would have to act more vigorously to create an attractive political alternative to Peronism. Given both the character of his administration and the weakness of his position in Congress, it is unlikely that he can do this. Alternatively, he would have to devise some way to restrict Peronist participation in the elections. In deciding on this, he

¹⁰ These provinces, with the Federal District, make up a large part of the important central-eastern section of Argentina, which, although comprising only one-third of the national territory, has three-quarters of the electorate. (See Map—"Argentine Regions and Population Distribution.")



⁹ One-third of the Senate seats will fall vacant during 1966. Filling these seats, in most cases indirectly by vote of provincial legislatures, may impose certain additional strains, if the UCRP loses its present narrow Senate majority.



will have to weigh not only the relative electoral prospects of the UCRP and the Peronists, but also the likely reaction of the Peronists to such restrictions and the likelihood of a military coup if the Peronists are not restricted.

Subversive Potentialities

35. An incipient guerrilla operation discovered in a remote area in north-western Argentina in 1964 failed to win any popular support and was suppressed by the National Gendarmerie. Hardline Communist elements probably have a considerable potential for sporadic acts of sabotage and terrorism, particularly in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area, although they have yet to demonstrate this capability. In general, the Communists and Castroists have no significant subversive potential in Argentina except insofar as they may be able to act in conjunction with a mass reaction of frustrated and embittered Peronists.

36. During 1964 Peronist labor leaders sought to foment public repudiation of the Illia administration through a concerted program of strikes and mass demonstrations. They hoped to make political capital of their championship of working class interests, no matter what the outcome. If the administration submitted to their economic and political demands, the political credit and advantage would be theirs. If Illia suppressed the movement by force—or if the military were provoked to cast out Illia and take charge themselves—the Peronists would have established their leadership of the masses against a repressive regime. Illia defeated this Peronist strategy, however, by a judicious combination of conciliatory measures, firmness in the maintenance of law and order, and avoidance of violent repression. Non-Peronist labor organizations declined to support the Peronist campaign and the participation of even the Peronist rank-and-file dwindled away.

37. If denied a fair opportunity to participate in the 1967 elections, the more extreme Peronist leaders would almost certainly retaliate by again attempting to arouse the people against the government through a campaign of strikes and mass demonstrations. In this case, they might enlist more popular sympathy. Their initial objective would be to compel the government to permit their participation in the election. Failing in that, the die-hard Peronist fringe might resort to terrorism and calls for popular revolution. The more moderate Peronist majority would almost certainly oppose such action as inviting violent suppression. The security forces would almost certainly move in to suppress any Peronist threat to public order.

The Likelihood of a Military Coup

38. The military remain the only element in Argentina actually capable of overthrowing the constitutional government. Whether they will do so within the period of this estimate remains highly uncertain, depending almost entirely on their own estimate of the developing situation in Argentina.





- 39. General Onganía and the other officers now in control of the military establishment would prefer to preserve the constitutional regime, but, if they came to regard the Illia administration as intolerably ineffectual, they would act to reconstruct or remove it. This judgment might apply to a failure to cope effectively with either the economic problem or the Peronist political problem. The military would also be highly sensitive to any imputation of softness toward communism, at home or abroad. It goes without saying that they would react strongly to any attempt to impair the unity, independence, and prerogatives of the military establishment.
- 40. A military coup might also be initiated at a level below the high command. If, in that case, the present senior commanders concluded that they could not stop it, they might go along with it, in order to retain some control of the situation in the ultimate interest of constitutionalism.
- 41. If the military should conclude that the Peronists, under extremist leadership, were likely to prevail in the 1967 elections, they would first urge upon the government the necessity to restrict Peronist participation in the elections. If not satisfied in this respect, they would almost certainly intervene to impose their will, or to prevent or annul the elections.
- 42. There is one contingency in which the military reaction might be more complex and less certain. If, during the next year or so, the Peronist leadership, or some elements of it, should establish a reputation for reasonableness and moderation, some of the military might come to discriminate between "good" Peronists and "bad" Peronists and to tolerate the former. Others would deny the validity of any such distinction. Thus a Peronist electoral victory under moderate leadership might precipitate a division among the military, with some calling for immediate counteraction and others seeking to preserve the constitutional regime at least until the presidential election in 1969. We cannot predict the outcome in such a case. There might ensue a period of recurrent military crises, like that which occurred in 1962-1963.



APPENDIX

ARGENTINE POLITICAL PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS

The parties are listed in order of their political party strength as indicated by their representation in the National Chamber of Deputies.

1. The Peoples Radical Civic Union (UCRP)

a. Origins

The UCRP was formed in 1957 when the Radical Civic Union (UCR), founded in the early 1890s, split into pro-Frondizi (the UCRI) and anti-Frondizi organizations. The UCRP has three main factions and other smaller ones, all of which tend to group around one or more political personalities.

b. Principal Leaders

Arturo Illia was a relatively unimportant figure in the UCR in Córdoba for many years, despite his service as federal deputy (1948-1952), provincial congressman, and vice-governor. In 1962, however, he was the only UCRP gubernatorial candidate to defeat a Peronist opponent, and thereby gained national attention.

Ricardo Balbín, a long-time close associate of Frondizi's in the Intransigente faction of the UCR, was the UCRP presidential candidate in 1958 and is the President of the UCRP National Committee. His influence in UCRP councils is about as great as President Illia's. During the Perón regime Balbín was a symbol of resistance to the dictatorship, opposing Perón as UCR presidential candidate, in 1951, after having been jailed for disrespect (desacato) the previous year. The principal bases of his support are in Buenos Aires Province and in the party organization in certain other provinces.

Both Vice-President Carlos H. Perette and Minister of Foreign Affairs Miguel Angel Zavala Ortiz are former Federal Congressmen and members of the third main faction (Unionist) in the UCRP. They are also nationalistic (although Zavala Ortiz shows some signs of having moderated his views) and politically ambitious. As a result of Perette's opportunistic attempts to advance his career by pronouncements on foreign policy, by political manipulations in the Congress, and by supporting reincorporation in the Armed Services of expelled "Colorado" officers, the present Armed Forces leadership distrusts him and its support for Illia has been strengthened thereby.





c. General Party Doctrine and Program

The UCRP stressed the following points in its 1963 campaign, has adopted them as integral parts of its program, and has already acted on certain individual measures (these are marked with an asterisk).

- (1) Repeal of the proscriptions of political parties.*
- (2) Annulment of all petroleum contracts with foreign companies.*
- (3) Restoration of public confidence by payment of back salaries and pensions to retired state employees.*
- (4) Establishment of an Economic and Social Council responsible for development planning.*
- (5) Release from government control of trade unions associated with the CGT.*
- (6) Severance of Argentina's agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) if the agreement inhibits national economic development.
- (7) Decentralization to restore greater autonomy to provincial governments and to assure a more equitable distribution of wealth between the Federal Capital and the provinces of interior.
- (8) Granting to municipalities the right to limit the profits of public utility companies while ensuring the communities better public services.
- (9) Mechanization of the agricultural sector and improvement of transportation to enable Argentine products to compete on more favorable terms in world markets.

The UCRP is opposed to communism and to Castro's Cuba and, in power, has cooperated with the US and other Western nations, despite its deep-rooted nationalist views. In and out of power the UCRP has been vociferous in its defense of Argentina's claims to the Falkland Islands (occupied since the early 1830s by the UK) and to territories in Antarctica.

2. The Peronists

a. Origins

The Peronist Party (PP) was formed by General Juan D. Perón from the various political groups that had carried him to the Presidency in the 1946 national elections. Later, a Peronist Women's Party was founded by "Evita" Perón (d. 1952) and the two parties dominated Argentine politics until Perón's overthrow in September 1955. Since the Provisional Government outlawed the Peronist Parties (1955) the Peronists have formed various political organizations that have been subjected to political proscription and reorganized under various names. For the March 1965 elections the Popular Union (Unión Popular) served as the principal vehicle for presenting Peronist candidates and programs. There are also various provincial parties controlled by neo-Peronists, generally more moderate than the trade unionist leaders elected as Popular Union candi-





dates, and several extreme left splinter groups, formed by Peronists who would forego participation in elections and attempt to seize power by force.

b. Principal Leaders

In addition to the aging former dictator, Juan D. Perón, who serves as a rallying point for the divergent Peronist groups and remains the idol of the Peronist masses, there is a coterie of top leaders whose membership and influence has fluctuated as Perón has sought to keep control in his own hands. These include Alberto Iturbe, once Secretary General of Peronism's Coordinating Council; Jorge Antonio, Perón's partner in exploiting the Argentine treasury for their mutual benefit; Raúl Matera, a respected neurosurgeon who also was Secretary General of the Coordinating Council and was expelled for disobeying Perón's instructions that Peronists vote blank in the July 1963 elections; Augusto Vandor, a long-time leader of the Metallurgical Workers Union with moderate views and solid trade union support; Andrés Framini, head of the Textile Workers and a hard-line "insurrectionist" who was elected governor of Buenos Aires Province in the elections of March 1962 which were quickly annulled; and José Alonso, a veteran leader of the Garment Workers Union who was Federal Deputy when Perón was in power and, as Secretary General of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), exerts a moderating influence within the Peronist Movement.

c. General Party Doctrine and Program

The essence of the Peronist doctrine, Justicialism, is contained in Perón's own definition: "Neither right nor left nor in the center, but wherever the particular circumstances indicate." In power, Perón followed his prescription by granting organized labor extensive economic, political, and social gains and belaboring the US until deteriorating economic conditions forced him to seek a rapprochement with the US and to tighten down on labor. His trumpeted "Third Position" foreign policy was a brazenly opportunistic attempt to exploit traditional Argentine policies. Although Peronism is basically anti-Communist and anti-Castroist there are sectors of the movement that fear and hate the US even more than the Communists.

In its domestic policies Peronism is essentially statist and opposed to the austerity-type programs the Frondizi administration (1958-1962) enacted in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund. While Peronist spokesmen now declare themselves favorable to foreign investment, they have attacked the petroleum development contracts negotiated under Frondizi, and make much of the need to preserve the "national sovereignty." As a movement with its primary support in organized labor, Peronism's main emphasis is upon economic and social welfare measures designed to benefit Argentine labor.¹¹

¹¹ In addition to dutiful calls for Perón's return the Peronist leaders also insist that Evita Perón's remains—removed from CGT headquarters by the victorious anti-Perón forces in 1955—be restored.





3. The Movement of Integration and Development (MID)

a. Origins

The Movement of Integration and Development (MID) developed from a split over policy within the Intransigent Radical Civic Union (UCRI). When former President Arturo Frondizi sought an electoral alliance with the Peronists in the July 1963 elections, Oscar Alende refused to go along and, having gained control of the party machinery, did not withdraw his own candidacy for the presidency. The Frondizi faction left the UCRI and formed the Radical Intransigent Movement (MIR) which later became the MID. Its limited strength (6.4 percent of the total 1965 vote) is in middle class groups and is scattered throughout the country.

b. Principal Leaders

Arturo Frondizi, the principal leader of the MID, is a complex political personality obsessed with his mission to realize Argentine's economic and political potential for hemispheric leadership. Although his long opposition to Perón, while the latter was in power, and his courting of the Peronist masses after Perón's overthrow, have resulted in repudiation of Frondizi by both Peronists and anti-Peronists, he retains a loyal and even devoted personal following. Frondizi's only slim chance of regaining power is an alliance with other, more popular, political groups.

Sylvestre Bagnis, once prominent in the UCRI, and Rogelio Frigerio, the alleged "grey Eminence" of the Frondizi administration, are Frondizi's principal lieutenants.

c. General Party Program and Doctrine

In general, the MID program defends the Frondizi administration's policies, which stressed free-enterprise in the economic field and a foreign policy that was an admixture of basically anti-Communist and extreme non-interventionist views. The MID foreign policy is in the mainstream of traditional Argentine attitudes toward foreign relations, but its opposition to statism is the result of Frondizi's own shift from his former economic nationalist outlook during his term as the nation's Chief Executive. That shift reflects Frondizi's pragmatic analyses of Argentina's needs and his adaption of tactics to serve his primary goal—the attainment of the eminent position to which he believes Argentina is entitled in Latin America.

The MID program provides a clear alternative to the Illia administration's statist policies. It stresses the maximum use of free enterprise and private capital to achieve national development through industrialization, and urges restoration of the annulled petroleum contracts and conclusion of the Investment Guaranty Agreement to facilitate an inflow of foreign private capital. The MID also proposes that the national budget be balanced by eliminating the deficits





of state-operated enterprises. In its political planks the party emphasizes restoration of full political freedom for the Peronists and their integration into national political life.

4. The National Federation of Center Parties (FNCP)

a. Origins

The FNCP is the lineal descendent of the traditional conservative parties that dominated Argentine politics from 1874 to 1916 and returned to power in 1930 through an alliance with the military. The 1930-1943 era is known as the "Infamous" period from the conservatives' resort to the widespread electoral fraud to keep in power. During the Perón era, 1943-1955, the national organization of the conservative forces disintegrated, but the movement was maintained by provincial parties. In a few provinces, such as Mendoza, Corrientes, and San Luis, where they won in the March 1965 elections, the FNCP parties have regained considerable strength; elsewhere they have little effective popular support. The movement has respected leadership, but suffers from extensive factionalism.

b. Principal Leaders

Emilio Hardoy, President of the FNCP National Committee, is a respected moderate who generally has supported the Illia administration. On the other hand, Emilio Olmos, the Conservative presidential candidate in 1963, attacks the Illia government's statist policies as anathema to Conservative principles.

c. General Party Principles and Programs

The FNCP has consistently advocated limitations on state intervention in the economy, particularly in fields formerly open to private enterprise, a balanced budget, a sound currency, educational reforms, development of rural activities, protection of new industries, improved transportation facilities, and reduced taxes.

Traditionally the Conservatives have been anti-Communist and more closely oriented toward Western Europe than toward the US. Since World War II their ties with the US have increased and they have become supporters for the imposition of strong sanctions on Castro's Cuba. In line with their generally pro-US tendencies, the FNCP advocates renegotiation of the cancelled petroleum contracts with US companies.

5. The Intransigent Radical Civic Union (UCRI)

a. Origins

The UCRI resulted from the split in the old UCR following Perón's overthrow and was itself split in 1963 by the loss of the Frondizi faction (see 3a above). The faction that supported Oscar Alende in his 1963 presidential campaign won legal possession of the UCRI label by a subsequent electoral court decision.





b. Principal Leaders

Oscar Alende, UCRI presidential hopeful and former governor of Buenos Aires Province, is the party's major leader. Alende's presidential ambitions are probably responsible for the flexibility of his political principles. In view of the UCRI's poor showing in the March 1965 elections, he probably will overlook no opportunity to form a political coalition that appeared likely to further those ambitions. Celestino Gelsi, long-time Radical stalwart in Tucumán Province, is perhaps Alende's principal rival in the UCRI. Gelsi also is likely to be looking for a political combination to further his own political ambitions.

c. General Party Principles and Program

The UCRI is basically a moderate, left-of-center party whose attitudes are more likely to represent Alende's opportunism than any fixed list of party principles. The party's statements generally are designed to appeal to economic nationalists with a statist orientation. Nonetheless, the UCRI refrains from attacking the more moderate policies of its former caudillo, Frondizi, and opposes the Illia administration's cancellation of the petroleum contracts. It urges rapid industrialization and pays lip service to the idea of a balanced budget without indicating clearly how these goals are to be attained. The UCRI has also wooed the Peronists enthusiastically, but with very little success. Although basically friendly to the US, the UCRI stress on its "independent" position on foreign policy reflects its efforts to appeal to potential anti-US leftist supporters, Alende's own suspicions of US policy, and the influence of the traditional "independent" foreign policies of Argentine Radicalism.

6. Other Legal Political Parties

There are several other long-established Argentine political parties with strength in one or more provinces, but none of whom is likely to regain national prominence in the foreseeable future. The *Progressive Democrats* (*Partido Demócrata Progresista* (PDP)), for example, was founded over half a century ago, but retains a dominant position only in Corrientes Province, through its electoral coalition with the provincial Autonomist Party. Even with its support in certain other provinces the PDP secured only 5.8 percent of the total vote in 1965. Another moderate party, the relatively new *Union of Argentine People* (UDELPA), the vehicle of former President Aramburu, lost heavily in the 1965 elections. The UDELPA failed to elect a single candidate and lost the nine seats it had up for election.

The Socialist movement in Argentina has repeatedly been split since its founding in the 1890s. At present there are two Socialist Parties represented in the National Congress. Neither the Argentine Socialist Party (PSA) nor the Democratic Socialist Party (PSD), has much more than a modicum of support in the metropolitan area (Buenos Aires) and virtually none outside of it.





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The Christian Democratic Party (PDC) is also split by factionalism. It failed to elect a single one of its candidates for the National Chamber of Deputies, losing the three PDC seats up for re-election. Its chances of emulating the PDC successes in Chile are remote indeed.

The various provincial parties of the interior that won seats in the National Chamber of Deputies are preoccupied with local issues and have almost no chance of broadening their appeal. Even if they formed a coalition they would have little chance of doing more than influencing close votes in the National Congress.

7. The Argentine Communist Party (PCA)

The PCA, one of the oldest Latin American Communist parties (founded in 1918), has undergone recurrent repression, particularly in the 1930-1943 and 1959-1964 periods. Although the decree outlawing it was repealed in late 1964, the Illia administration has kept the PCA from participation in national elections through Electoral Court decisions that the PCA could not qualify because of its anti-Argentine orientation and subservience to non-Argentine influence.

The PCA membership is estimated at from 60,000-65,000 and in 1958 its candidates for a constitutional convention received almost 230,000 votes, or 2.6 percent of the total vote. Its numerical strength is concentrated in the city of Buenos Aires and the adjoining metropolitan area, but the PCA does have some limited support in several provinces.

The principal PCA leader is still Victorio Codovilla, party President and one of the party's founders. Jerónimo Arnedo Alvarez, the party's Secretary General, Orestes Ghioldi, Rodolfo Ghioldi, Víctor Larralde, Benito Marianetti, Vicente Marischi, and Alcira de la Peña are veteran PCA leaders but no one of these appears to approach Codovilla's position of leadership.

The PCA draws the bulk of its membership from urban manual workers and lower middle-class white-collar workers. It also has supporters in professional and intellectual circles, including some university and secondary school students.

The PCA has closely hewed to the Moscow line, as one of the most faithful and monolithic of Latin American Communist parties. Individuals and small groups disagreeing with Codovilla's policies and tactics have split off from time to time without noticeably effecting PCA membership. These have included groups opposed to the anti-Perón stance of the PCA leadership in the 1940s, and more recent desertions of "activists" favoring the Castroite or Red Chinese approach to gaining power. Nevertheless, the PCA continues to plump for the parliamentary route in the apparent hope that it can inherit Peronist mass support.





8. Communist Splinter Groups

There are two small pro-Chinese Communist organizations in Argentina, the Movement of Revolutionary Action (Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria (MAR)) and the Revolutionary Vanguard (Vanguardia Revolucionaria). Both groups are led by former PCA or Communist Youth Federation (FJC) members expelled for protesting the PCA line vis-a-vis the Chinese Communists.

The Trotskyite Communist Movement has a much longer history and is more firmly established than the pro-Chinese Communist groups. The largest element is the Trotskyite Labor Party (Partido Obrero Trotskista—POT). Its most important leaders are Roberto Múñiz, secretary general of the Party, Angel Fanjul and Jorge Posadas. Another Trotskyite organization Labor's Word (Palabra Obrera), operates within the Peronist movement and, unlike POT, is not hostile to the regular Communist Party. The Revolutionary Movement of the Left (Movimiento Izquierda Revolucionario—MIR), more commonly known as PRAXIS, is a small group, mainly intellectuals, seeking to provide guidance to the Peronists. All together, the Argentine Trotskyite movement probably has a total membership of under 10,000.

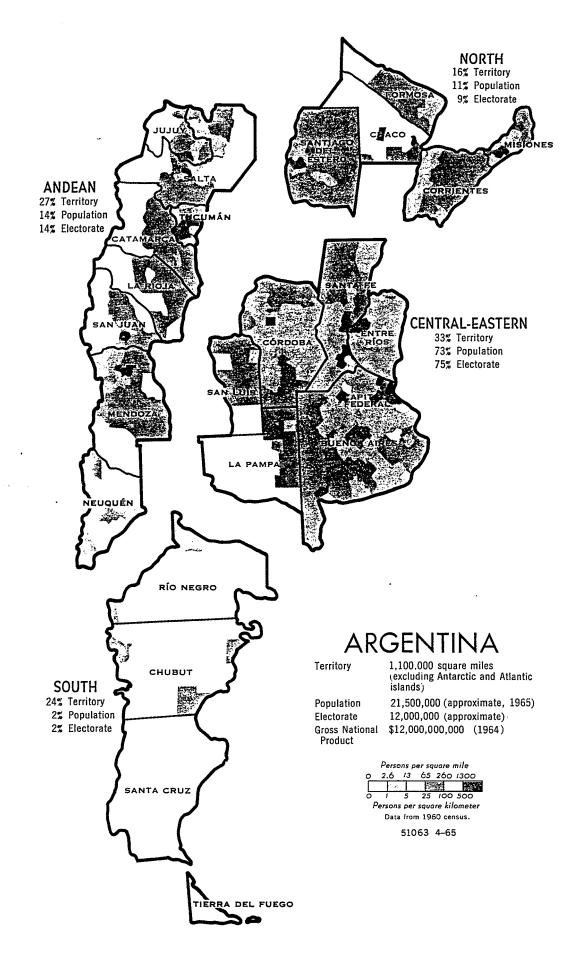
9. Extreme Rightist Groups

Since the May 1960 kidnapping of ex-Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, in Buenos Aires, by Israeli agents and his subsequent execution in Israel (May 1962), the latent anti-Semitism in Argentina has surfaced in terrorist acts directed against Argentines with Jewish ancestry (some 450,000 in number). Several organizations have been involved, but the most influential ones are Tacuara, also known as the Nationalist Civic Union (Unión Cívica Nacionalista), and the Nationalist Restoration Guard (Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista—GRN). In the main the members of both organizations are young men from middle and upper class groups. In addition to their anti-Semiticism, both organizations are extremely nationalistic and seek to seize power by violence. Both reveal Nazi influence in their ideologies, organization, and training, and have established paramilitary organizations.

Tacuara has been split by factionalism between two of its original leaders, Alberto Ezcurra Uriburu and José Baxter. Although Tacuara membership is nominally Roman Catholic, it is more leftist in its orientation than the Nationalist Restoration Guard, whose leadership works closely with the Reverend Julio Meinvielle, a controversial Roman Catholic priest long active in anti-Semitic circles in Argentina.

Neither organization has much prospect of seizing power by force, but they have been able to create considerable disturbances and, in view of their anti-US orientation, are capable of affecting US-Argentine relations by attacks on US installations and individuals.









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